

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney
Carol C. Lam***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - November 12, 2004

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that LATONYA MICHELLE TUCKER pled guilty today in federal district court in San Diego before United States District Judge Marilyn L. Huff to a second degree murder charge in the death of Jalen A. Ford, a thirteen-month-old infant entrusted to her care.

TUCKER who resided on Camp Pendleton at the time of the murder. TUCKER pled guilty, pursuant to a plea agreement, to the felony violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1111 -- a federal statute which covers murders which occur within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Bruce C. Smith, who is prosecuting the case, TUCKER admitted in her plea agreement that, on September 10, 2001, while residing on Camp Pendleton, she intentionally inflicted corporal punishment upon Jalen A. Ford, who was thirteen months old at the time. TUCKER also admitted that she intentionally dropped Jalen onto a hard surface, causing a traumatic brain injury. Two days later, on September 12, 2004, TUCKER delivered Jalen to the Tri-City Hospital Emergency Room. Despite heroic efforts by the medical staff, Jalen expired soon after his arrival.

Sentencing for TUCKER is scheduled for February 7, 2005 at 9:00 a.m., before Judge Huff.

This case is the product of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

DEFENDANT

Latonya Michelle Tucker

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 18, United States Code, Section 1111 - Second Degree Murder (one count)

Maximum penalty: Life in prison; fine of \$250,000

AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Naval Criminal Investigative Service